

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): An expansion valve block for controlling or adjusting the pressure or the flow rate of a fluid, comprising,

- a) a main body within which at least one internal fluid passage between at least one fluid inlet orifice and at least one fluid outlet orifice is formed;
- b) at least one fluid-pressure control means arranged on at least part of said internal fluid passage between said fluid inlet orifice and said fluid outlet orifice, such that the portion of said internal fluid passage between said pressure control means and the fluid inlet orifice forms forming an upstream circuit and the internal fluid passage between said pressure control means and the fluid outlet orifice forms forming a downstream circuit;
- c) at least one first fluid flow rate control means arranged on at least part of the downstream circuit;
- d) at least one second fluid flow rate control means arranged on at least part of the upstream circuit; and
- e) at least one command means for causing a fluid to flow in the passage, ~~eharacterized in that~~ wherein the command means collaborates with the first and second fluid flow rate control means in such a way that, when an ~~the~~ operator commands delivery of a fluid in the passage, the opening of the upstream circuit by the second control means occurs before the opening of the downstream circuit by the first control means and, when an ~~the~~ operator commands the stopping of the delivery of a fluid in the passage, closure of the downstream circuit by the first control means occurs before closure of the upstream

circuit by the second control means.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the second fluid flow rate control means arranged on at least part of the upstream circuit is a valve with an axially moving shutter.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim ~~15~~, 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first fluid flow rate control means arranged on at least part of the downstream circuit ~~is comprises~~ a cylinder having a base at one end of the cylinder, the cylinder being pierced radially therethrough by right through which a duct is radially pierced, said cylinder body of the block and being placed in a bore "hole" in the body of the expansion valve block.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim ~~16~~ 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein one of the bases of the cylinder is the axially moving shutter of the second fluid control means arranged on at least part of the upstream circuit.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim ~~16~~ 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the command means is a screw collaborating with the cylinder/cylinder and the shutter in such a way that turning the screw ~~it~~ simultaneously causes axial translational movement of the shutter and axial rotation of the cylinder.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the surface of the cylinder is covered with a material which provides sealing between the cylinder and the main body of the expansion valve block.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the base of the cylinder further comprises a peripheral annulus that is hollowed out around its annular periphery and in that a seal that is positioned in this peripheral annulus.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pressure control means comprises at least one shutter and/or at least one spring.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pressure control means comprises a pressure relieving screw or a cam acting on at least one shutter.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The block as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said block further comprises a moving lever that can be manipulated by the operator between at least one fluid flow rate open and at least one fluid flow rate closed position, said lever acting on the command means.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): A pressurized-fluid vessel equipped with an expansion valve block as claimed in claim 14.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A method for delivering a fluid in an expansion valve block, said expansion valve block comprising an upstream circuit, and a downstream circuit in which the pressure is below the pressure in the upstream circuit, a first control means for opening said downstream circuit, a second control means for opening said upstream circuit and a means for commanding the circulation of the fluid, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein when ~~an the~~ operator initiates the means for commanding the circulation of the fluid, the opening of the upstream circuit by the second control means occurs before the opening of the downstream circuit by the first control means.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): A method for stopping delivery of a fluid in an expansion valve block, said expansion valve block comprising an upstream circuit and a downstream circuit in which the pressure is below the pressure in the upstream circuit, a first control means for opening said downstream circuit, a second control means for opening said

upstream circuit and a means for commanding the circulation of the fluid, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ when ~~an~~ the operator initiates the means for commanding the circulation of the fluid by stopping of the delivery of the fluid, the closure of the downstream circuit by the first control means occurs before closure of the upstream circuit by the second control means.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The pressurized-fluid vessel of claim 24, wherein said vessel is a gas cylinder.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 25, wherein said means for commanding the circulation of the fluid is a screw.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 26, wherein said means for commanding the circulation of the fluid is a screw.

Claim 30 (New): The block as claimed in claim 15, wherein the first fluid flow rate control means arranged on at least part of the downstream circuit comprises a cylinder having a base at one end of the cylinder, the cylinder being pierced radially therethrough by a duct and being placed in a bore in the body of the expansion valve block.

Claim 31 (New): The block as claimed in claim 18, wherein the surface of the cylinder is covered with a material which provides sealing between the cylinder and the main body of the expansion valve block.

Claim 32 (New): The block as claimed in claim 18, wherein the base of the cylinder further comprises a peripheral annulus that is hollowed out and a seal that is positioned in this peripheral annulus.

Claim 33 (New): The block as claimed in claim 19, wherein the base of the cylinder further comprises a peripheral annulus that is hollowed out and a seal that is positioned in this

peripheral annulus.

Claim 34 (New): The block as claimed in claim 17, wherein the pressure control means comprises at least one shutter and/or at least one spring.

Claim 35 (New): The block as claimed in claim 18, wherein the pressure control means comprises at least one shutter and/or at least one spring.

Claim 36 (New): The block as claimed in claim 19, wherein the pressure control means comprises at least one shutter and/or at least one spring.

Claim 37 (New): The block as claimed in claim 17, wherein the pressure control means comprises a pressure relieving screw or a cam acting on at least one shutter.

Claim 38 (New): The block as claimed in claim 18, wherein the pressure control means comprises a pressure relieving screw or a cam acting on at least one shutter.

Claim 39 (New): The block as claimed in claim 19, wherein the pressure control means comprises a pressure relieving screw or a cam acting on at least one shutter.

Claim 40 (New): The block as claimed in claim 18, wherein said block further comprises a moving lever that can be manipulated by the operator between at least one fluid flow rate open and at least one fluid flow rate closed position, said lever acting on the command means.

Claim 41 (New): The block as claimed in claim 19, wherein said block further comprises a moving lever that can be manipulated by the operator between at least one fluid flow rate open and at least one fluid flow rate closed position, said lever acting on the command means.

Claim 42 (New): The block as claimed in claim 20, wherein said block further comprises a moving lever that can be manipulated by the operator between at least one fluid flow rate open and at least one fluid flow rate closed position, said lever acting on the command means.